

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 09474 221331Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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S E C R E T LAGOS 9474

NODIS

FROM YOUNG AND MOOSE FOR CHRISTOPHER

WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

DEPARTMENT PASS USUN NEW YORK AND PRETORIA

E.O. 11652: XGDS 3

TAGS: PORG, PARM, US, SF

SUBJECT: LAGOS CONFERENCE: SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY

REF: STATE 199072, PRETORIA 4238

1. APPRECIATE INFORMATION CONTAINED REFTEL AND AGREE THAT CLOSE COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IN THIS DELICATE SITUATION.

2. WE CANNOT EMHASIZE TOO STRONGLY THE STRAIN WHICH SUGGESTION THAT A SOUTH AFRICAN NUNCLEAR EXPLOSION IS A POSSIBILITY IN NEAR FUTURE OR EVEN THAT SUCH A CAPABILITY IS A DEMONSTRATED REALITY WILL PLACE ON THIS CONFERENCE AND ON OUR POLICIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST. THE LIKELIHOOD IS GREAT THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL DO WHAT THEY CAN TO EXPLOIT THIS ISSUE IN LAGOS. WHILE THE UNITED STATES IS TECHNICALLY BLAMELESS, THE FINE DISTINCTIONS IN OUR DENIALS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE LOST. UNDER MUCH CIRCUMSTANCES A

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POSITION COORDINATED WITH OUR WESTERN ALLIES, ESPECIALLY INCLUDING FRANCE, WOULD BE WELL-NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. SHOULD THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRAELI COMPLICITY IN SAG NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT BE RAISED, WE WOULD BE IN A DOUBLY DIFFICULT POSITION. IN SUCH A CONTEXT WE MIGHT FACE AN EVERY-MAN-FOR-HIMSELF SITUATION.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT PROMPT AFFIRMATION FROM PRETORIA ON THE THREE POINTS PUT TO THEM IN STATE 198014, PLUS SAG ADHERENCE TO THE NPT, IS AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT. HOWEVER, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT, WHILE TIME CONSIDERATIONS MAY GIVE US NO OTHER CHOICE, WE MUST BE CAREFUL ABOUT APPEARING TO ACCEPT SOUTH AFRICA'S WORD ON THESE POINTS OR GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SUCH ASSURANCES ARE SUFFICIENT. SAG AFFIRMATION SHOULD NOT PRECLUDE OUR INSPECTION UPON INSPECTION OF THE KALAHARI SITE. CONFERENCE DELEGATES, ESPECIALLY AFRICANS, WILL PAY LITTLE HEED TO PRETORIA'S AFFIRMATIONS AND OUR ACCEPTANCE OF THEM ALSO WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SATISFY THEIR CONCERNS. INDEED, SHOULD WE BASE OUR PUBLIC POSITION ON THEIR OFFERING SUCH ASSURANCES, WE WOULD APPEAR TO AFRICANS AS AT BEST GULLIBLE, OR MORE LIKELY APOLOGISTS. IF THIS ISSUE IS TO BE DEALT WITH HERE AND THE DANGERS TO OUR POLICIES IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONTAINED IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO DEMONSTRATE AN ACTIVE DETERMINATION TO DETER FURTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THIS COULD BE DONE ABSENT INSISTENCE UPON AN INSPECTION OF THE PRESUMPTIVE TEST SITE.

4. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO THE SECRETARY.

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